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THE

CELEBRATED CENTURY SERMON,

OF THE

REV. NATHANAEL HOWE

OF

HOPKINTON, MASS.

TOGETHER WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

BY ELIAS NASON, A. M.

A

CENTURY SERMON,

DELIVERED IN HOPKINTON, MASS.

ON

LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 24, 1815.

BY

NATHANAEL HOWE, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

"YEA, I THINK IT MEET, AS LONG AS I AM IN THIS TABERNACLE, TO STIR YOU UP, BY PUTTING YOU IN REMEMBRANCE."
The Apostle Peter.

FOURTH EDITION.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,
BY ELIAS NASON, A. M.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. NATHANAEL HOWE,

OF HOPKINTON, MASS.

"MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT; FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE." — *David.*

THE subject of this Memoir was a remarkable man. The cast of his mind was original and severe. The bent of his genius was to be useful to his fellow-men; and the leading features in his compact and massive character stood forth in such distinct relief, as to leave an indelible impress on the moral aspect of the community in which he lived.

He was one among a class of divines now rapidly passing away, who have magnified their office; who

"Ne'er have changed, nor wished to change their place,"

but whose names are identified with the names of the towns where they reside; and this brief notice of his life, though destitute of striking incident, will, it is hoped, prove acceptable, not only to those who knew him, and who hold his memory dear; but also to those young clergymen who are rising up to fill the places of "the great and good" of other days.

Mr. Howe was born in Linebrook parish, in Ipswich, Mass., on the 6th of October, 1764.

He was the third son of Captain Abraham and Lucy (Appleton) Howe, from whom he received a sound physical constitution, and that early moral culture which was to give shape and direction to his whole life.

Although diffident and bashful in his boyhood, he was noted for his conscientious regard for truth; and his parents, discovering in him an unusual

aptitude to learn, sent him to Dummer Academy[1] at Byfield, then under the care of Mr. Samuel Moody, to prepare for college.

On leaving this place, he studied for a while with the Rev. Mr. Leslie of Linebrook; and then with the Rev. Mr. E. Bradford of Ipswich, with a view to fit himself to enter college two classes in advance.

It was under the faithful instruction of this latter gentleman, for whom he always entertained the kindest regard, that his mind was impressed with a deep sense of his condition as a sinner, and of his obligations to God; and was brought, through penitence and faith in Christ, to entertain that "hope which maketh not ashamed."

He soon after made a public profession of religion, and united with Mr. Bradford's church, at Ipswich.

In September, 1784, he entered, by the advice and recommendation of Mr. Bradford, the junior class at Nassau Hall, in Princeton, N. J., of which the celebrated Dr. Witherspoon from Scotland, was then president.

Having remained at Princeton one year, he asked and obtained, an honorable dismission; and then entered the senior class of Harvard University, where he was graduated in 1786. His standing in college as a scholar was respectable, and his moral character without reproach.

Although his residence at Nassau Hall was brief, he seems to have profited much by the eloquent and impressive religious instruction of Dr. Witherspoon, and to have made great advancement in the divine life.

He was always very fond of quoting from Dr. Witherspoon; and one of his sayings: "Never begin to speak until you have something to say, and leave off when you have done," he fairly carried into practice through his whole life.

On leaving college, Mr. Howe spent some time in teaching school in his native town; and then entered on his course of theological study, under the tuition of Dr. Hart, of Connecticut; which he, however, completed under the direction of Dr. Emmons, of Franklin, Mass. From this distinguished divine, who continued his intimate friend through life, he received, not only a clear elucidation of the Calvinistic system of divinity; but also, in part, that severe style of thought and expression which sometimes bordered upon eccentricity. He was not an imitator; and yet, in his close intimacy with Dr. Emmons, who was the oracle of theological students of that day, he no doubt, unconsciously, imbibed of him many of those peculiar mental habits, for which both were so remarkable.

On becoming a licenciate, he preached at Londonderry and Francistown, N. H., at Hampton, Conn., and at Grafton, Mass. He received a call to settle over the church of this latter place, which he judged it prudent to decline.

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1 Two large pear-trees, which he planted while a member of Dummer, now overshadow with their branches the ancient house at Linebrook, where he was born.

In January, 1791, he began to preach at Hopkinton as a candidate; and in May following, received a unanimous call from the church to settle as its pastor. The citizens of the town desired, however, that he should admit children to baptism whose parents were in the "half-way-covenant;" (for an account of which, see his "Century Sermon;") but finding him opposed to it, they finally united in the call of the church, and he was settled as minister for life, October 5, 1791, with a salary of £70;[1] together with "the improvement (i e. use) of the ministerial land."[2] £200 were also allowed him as a "settlement."

In answer to the call, Mr. Howe says: "At my first coming to this town, things appeared gloomy, but as I became acquainted with the people, that gloom vanished, and the town appeared more agreeable. When I consider the harmony of the church, the unanimity of the town, their generosity in respect to my support, added to that spirit of candor which seemed to prevail in our public conference-meeting, I am induced to accept your invitation."

The ordination sermon was preached by his venerated instructor, the Rev. Mr. Bradford of Ipswich.

About three months after his settlement, Mr. Howe was married to OLIVE, the sixth daughter of Col. John Jones[3] of Hopkinton, by whom he had the following children, namely: APPLETON,[4] born November 26, 1792, and now a distinguished physician of Weymouth, Mass.; ELIZA, born June 4, 1794, and died of consumption, December 27, 1815; MARY JONES, born February 2, 1802, was married to the Rev. Samuel Russell of Boylston, and died November 26, 1836; and LUCY ANN, born August 27, 1805, and was married to Mr. John Fitch, son of Deacon Elijah Fitch, of whom honorable mention is made in the "Century Sermon."

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1 This salary, though it afterwards depreciated in actual value about one half, was never changed. It was a narrow-minded policy on the part of the town thus to withhold from its minister a fair support. It compelled him, in his own quaint and severe language, "to do *their business*, and neglect *his own*;" for, continues he, "What is your business? Your business is to support your minister; and that is what I have been doing for more than twenty years. And what is *my business*? My business is to preach, and in this I have never abounded." Had the town requited him justly for his services, it would have received the full benefit of the powers of a mind, unusually strong and vigorous, devoted exclusively to its spiritual welfare.

It was fortunate, however, in having a minister who had the wit to write a couple of sermons of a Saturday afternoon; and who knew how to draw blood without disturbing the temper of the patient. It is doing better now.

2 This consisted of 100 acres; together with the same quantity of "common land," given by the Trustees of Hopkins's donation in 1711, for the support of the "ministry" in Hopkinton.

3 He was the third son of Col. John Jones, who came from Boston to Hopkinton, and was admitted "a member in full communion" to the church, December 10, 1727, and died February 7, 1773, aged 82 years.

4 He was graduated at Cambridge, in 1815, and studied medicine with Drs. Warren and Jackson of Boston. He has been twice elected State senator; and also to the office of Major-general of the first division of the Massachusetts militia. His character, in some respects, resembles that of his father. Like him, he possesses that manly independence which is sure to make strong friends, as well as enemies; and to command the respect of both.

Soon after his marriage, Mr. Howe purchased of Deacon S. Kinsman, the house and farm,[1] distant about half a mile from the meeting-house, and near the "ministerial land," where he was to spend the remainder of his life.

He had married into an influential family, his pecuniary circumstances were easy, his health good, and his church flourishing. His prospects of usefulness were unclouded; and, buoyant with hope, he dedicated all his energies to the work before him.

His time was now for several successive years divided between his pastoral duties, the composition and delivery of sermons, and the reading of Baxter, Bunyan, Saurin, South, Hopkins, Witherspoon, and Emmons; who continued to be his favorite, and almost his only authors, to the end of life.

The times, however, did not long remain so easy. Finding after a while the expenses of his family rapidly increasing, and his salary, from the depreciation in the value of money, becoming altogether inadequate to its support, he began to relinquish, in some degree, his literary and theological pursuits, and to labor with his own hands upon his farm, in order that he might "provide things honest in the sight of all men," for the maintenance of his household.

Adopting, as the times demanded, a rigid, though not a mean, economy in his domestic affairs, and toiling vigorously with the axe in winter, with the plough in spring, and the scythe in summer, he was enabled to eke out his scanty salary of £70 in such a manner, as to maintain his family, to give his children a good education, and to make his charities and almsgiving felt throughout the town.

"We have a good soil," says he to the people in a discourse delivered in 1830; "rough indeed, and rocky; but when well cultivated, it produces a rich crop, and amply pays for the labor; I speak from experience; *I have tried it.*"

In his earnest efforts to induce the town to make up to him the depreciation in his salary, so quaintly set forth in his "Century Sermon," he seems to have acted from a profound and innate sense of justice; and his biting and oft-repeated reproofs to his people for their delinquency in respect to his support, appear to have been administered "more in sorrow than in anger." Mr. Howe loved his people; and they respected him. The bonds that united him to them were cemented in honor and integrity; nor did he ever dream of breaking them without the full and free consent of both the church and town.

A man of sterling probity, he thought correctly, and said what he thought; and though his people disregarded his remonstrances, they had the good sense to perceive that he was in the right, and the patience to endure the sharp rebukes they so well merited.

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1 Now in the possession of Mr. John Fitch.

He did not fail to improve, to the end of his life, all suitable occasions for reminding the town of its injustice in regard to his support.

In his sermon preached at the dedication of the new church, in 1830, which forms a very good counterpart to his "Century Sermon," he says: "To the male inhabitants of the parish, it is no part of my intention to-day to make any complaint for any lack of *justice*, or equity, or *mercy* in your treatment of me in respect to my support; that must be left to God and your own consciences and a future day of retribution."

It was a maxim often repeated by Mr. Howe, that "the second vice is lying; the first, is running in debt," and the fear of incurring liabilities which he could not meet, often led him into doubts and anxieties, which seemed to indicate the want of a suitable trust in the divine beneficence. Of his firm reliance on the goodness of God, however, there can be no doubt; he looked upon himself only as the steward and almoner of his bounty; he labored with his hands; he practised self-denial; he sought for justice from his fellow-men;—not for the sake of hoarding money; not for the sake of benefiting himself alone; but in order that he might "owe no man anything but love;" in order that he might have something to relieve the wants of the distressed.

Owing to the rise in the value of his real estate, to legacies from deceased relatives, and to his persevering and well-directed industry, he was enabled to leave property amounting to between four and five thousand dollars. This was, however, not one third of what the legacies themselves, had they remained on interest, would have been.

It would be doing injustice not to mention that while the parish, as such, remained indifferent to the claims of its minister, many of the citizens of the town extended to him their sympathies and contributed something to make up the deficiency in his salary.

In 1811, the ladies of the parish presented him an elegant surplice; and on the very day after the delivery of his "Century Sermon," which "cut the consciences of his people to the quick," a subscription-paper was started for the purpose of raising money to purchase him a suit of clothes. The caption of this paper, on which I find between forty and fifty names, is alike honorable to himself and to his friends.

"December 25, 1815.

"We, the subscribers, feeling sensible of our obligations to support a minister, and being perfectly acquainted with the many persecutions which the Rev. Nathanael Howe has suffered; viewing the distressful and unhappy situation of his family; feeling it a duty incumbent on us as citizens of the town and friends of good order; being conscious that the regular and exemplary life which our much-respected minister has ever led, has tended greatly to the happiness of his people, and knowing that the pecuniary aid rendered him by the town is quite insufficient for his support; agree to pay the several sums affixed to our names, for the purpose of purchasing him a mourning suit, which in all probability in a few days he must be called to wear."

The whole amount subscribed was $65, of which Elizabeth Price[1] and Mary Hildreth gave $5 each; Joseph Valentine $3, Arba Thayer, Samuel Goddard, Mr. Herrick, Mr. Valentine, W. Rockwood, E. Fairbanks, J. Burnap, R. Smith, Samuel Valentine, F. Holmes, and Benjamin Adams, $2 each; and all the others, $1 each.

This "mourning suit" was hardly done, when Mr. Howe was called upon, as anticipated in the heading of the subscription-list, to put it on and wear it at the funeral of Eliza, his oldest daughter, who died on the 27th of this, "the gloomiest December" he had ever seen.

He seemed to have had that same intense affection for this child which Edmund Burke felt for his son; her death filled his mind with the keenest anguish, and to it may be attributed, in a great degree, that remarkable "depression of spirit," which came upon him at intervals through the remainder of his life.

In politics, Mr. Howe was a conservative and a consistent advocate of the leading measures of the whig party. He thought it the duty of every minister of the gospel to make his political principles distinctly known; and he therefore sometimes spoke with undue severity against the measures of the popular party in Hopkinton. The native independence of his character led him to despise every kind of political artifice; and nothing could ever prevent him from proclaiming freely the honest convictions of his mind upon all those subjects of national, state, and town policy, with which he was in any way conversant.

He defined his political position in early life, and his opponents always found him zealously maintaining it with his front directed towards them to the last.

Not long after the delivery of his "Century Sermon," and while suffering under great depression of spirits, he preached a discourse from the text, "Finally, brethren, pray for us," which gave great offence to his congregation. Among other severe things, he said that he had reason to believe "that the day of his funeral would be a day of as great joy to this people as the day of his ordination." This discourse occasioned several meetings of the church; but it was finally concluded that the objectionable remarks were as well-meant as they were justly merited; and the whole matter was dropped. Mr. Howe called the church "a minister's lifeguard;" and "what should you think," said he to his people in reference to his own peculiar position, "what should you think of the situation of a general, whom his own lifeguard should threaten to shoot for fear of his being destroyed by the enemy." It may be here observed, that many of his illustrations of this nature are inimitable and perfectly to the point.

At one time during his ministry, the singers all took offence and left the

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1 Daughter of the Rev. Roger Price, Rector of King's Chapel, Boston.

choir. On the next Sabbath, he related the following dream, which had the desired effect, of restoring them to their places. He dreamed that a spirit from the other world appeared before him, and informed him that there was singing enough in heaven, but none in hell; and that one of the most essential distinctions between angels and devils consists in this, that the former delight in singing, while the latter have no inclination to engage in this heavenly employment.

The angels (continued the spirit) were all created in holiness; but in process of time a part of them became tired of employing their faculties in singing the songs of heaven. When these were urged to use *all* their talents in the service of God, they said they had no *encouragement* to sing, or, in other words, no pay! They would not trust the Lord to reward them, but must be paid by their fellow-servants. The Almighty, therefore, prepared them a different place and *name*.

I awoke, (said Mr. Howe,) and lay musing on the subject for sometime, and then fell asleep; my thoughts turned to my former dream; departed spirits appeared to me, and their conversation was audible. At length, one of them stood forth to interpret the dream, and said it had respect to the people of Hopkinton. Your last year's singers (observed the interpreter) are all dead. I saw them go to heaven's gate and knock for admission. Whereupon Gabriel opened the gate and said, "Who are you? Can you sing?" "No!" "Then you cannot be admitted here." "We did sing for a time," replied they, "but were discouraged." "He that putteth his hand to the plough," answered Gabriel, "and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God; you cannot be admitted here." "We would have sung, if there had been suitable encouragement." "Those who *will not* sing on earth," returned the angel, "*shall not* sing in heaven. You can't be admitted here: Depart, depart!" Upon this, the gulf opened and swallowed them up. Then I awoke, (said Mr. Howe,) and "behold it was a dream; but the *thing* was *certain*, and the *interpretation* thereof, *sure*."

The only "tune" which Mr. Howe is ever known to have learned to sing is "Islington;" but though he had no musical powers in himself, he appreciated them highly in others; and sometimes "boarded" the singing-master gratuitously, in order that he might have music in his family, and improve the style of it in his church. In his dedication sermon, 1830, he says, "I feel myself under more obligation to them (the singers) than to any other class of the parish."

To his efforts and encouragement may be attributed in part that lively interest in sacred music which has so long prevailed in Hopkinton, and which continues unabated to the present time.

In the education of the young, he took a special interest. He was in the habit, so long as the state of his health permitted, of visiting all the public schools in town once or twice a year, for the purpose of catechizing the

children, of giving them pious counsel, and of encouraging them in the pursuit of useful knowledge. He was very fond of children; and had a rare faculty of interesting them in what he said, and of winning their affection and respect. He never left a school without uniting with it in prayer; without impressing some striking thought upon the minds of all.

"How much pleasure I feel," said he on a certain occasion, "when I see a good master, or a good mistress and a good school, in good order, with their bright eyes and ivory teeth, trying to learn. It keeps coming into my mind, The world is indeed growing better!"

The most highly-valued present which the writer of this has ever received is a "Bible," given him by the Rev. Mr. Howe, as "a reward of merit," when a boy at school.

Several young men were led, by Mr. Howe's advice and pecuniary assistance, to obtain a liberal education; and two of them are now distinguished clergymen, one in this, and another in an adjoining State.

In common with many ministers of his time, Mr. Howe was in the habit of using moderately stimulating drink; which he thought essential to the support of his constitution under the severe manual labor in which he engaged.

It is related of him, that while on a journey to Boston with a load of ship-timber on one bitter cold day in winter, he stopped at a tavern and called for a glass of brandy; but the tavern-keeper, not recognizing in his customer the minister of Hopkinton, and noticing the tremulous motion in his limbs (which was habitual with him), refused to accommodate him, on the ground that he had drunk enough already. Mr. Howe very good-naturedly desired him to treat every applicant for brandy in the same manner, and went on his way, philosophising, no doubt, upon the best means of making the town of Hopkinton support its minister.

When the temperance reformation begun, however, he was one of the first to engage in a society for the promotion of the cause; yet he was slow to believe that temperance meant "total abstinence from all which intoxicates." In his dealings with his fellow-men he was open-handed and above-board, and he desired the same kind of treatment in return. The following letter, written near the close of his life, illustrates this trait in his character, and shows how he stood in respect to the temperance cause. It will sufficiently explain itself.

"*To the Managers of the Temperance Society in Hopkinton.*

"Gentlemen: The language and spirit of your letter to me, dated Feb. 19, 1836, have merited and received my attention; the result of which I will communicate to you. Seeing you are grieved at my using of gin, at different times and places, not privately, but publicly, under the direction and advice of a temperate physician, which is agreeable to your own by-laws, for a complaint which has attended me for years, and sometimes seriously threat-

ened my life, I am led to conclude it is best for me to resign my office as president of your society, and require that my name should be erased from the number of its members; not from any disregard or disaffection to the temperance cause, which ought to be sustained by every member of the community; but from your disrespect to me as your president, in calling and holding a meeting without my knowledge or consent, to do business which was more interesting to me than any other member. This, gentlemen, I receive unkindly. This reason I consider sufficient for requiring that my name should be erased from your body, and from this time I shall consider my connection with the temperance society in Hopkinton dissolved. Let me say, I have the present week joined the county temperance society in Charlestown, and hope to avoid whatever will be injurious to its progress. It is my intention to harbor no unfriendly feelings to your number on account of anything said or done with respect to this matter. With sentiments of respect, I am yours, etc. etc. NATHANAEL HOWE.

"February, 25, 1836."

In February, 1827, Mr. Howe's second daughter, Mary Jones, was married to the Rev. Mr. Russell, then minister of Boylston, Mass. She had embraced religion some ten years previous, and her union with an efficient minister of the Cross gave hopes — too soon, alas! to be blasted — of a long career of usefulness and of happiness to come.

In this year, Mr. Howe was made a life-member of the American Education Society, by the ladies of his parish. He had been made a life-member of the American Bible Society, in 1822.

In the year 1828, his health began to decline, and the church and some of the parish thought the time had come to have a new minister. A meeting was therefore held, and a joint committee of the church and parish appointed, to agree with him on the terms of his dismission. It was proposed and accepted, that they should give him a thousand dollars, to be paid in ten annual instalments, without interest; and in case he should not live ten years, it was to be secured to his family. A mutual council was immediately called, of which Dr. Kellogg was moderator, which voted to dissolve the connection between Mr. Howe and his people, provided they should fulfil their agreement with him. Four days after this, the parish held another meeting, and rescinded the vote to dismiss their pastor, by a majority of 66 to 42; but made no provision to relieve him from the expense of the council, which had been mutually called for his dismission. Of this injustice, he was never heard to complain.

He hoped the old meeting-house, which was built in 1725, with square, uncomfortable pews, and with a huge "sounding-board" above the towering pulpit, "would last as long as he did;" but when the parish had decided to build another house, he rendered it all the assistance in his power.

Preaching one day to his people, before they had fully determined to erect a new house, and perceiving them to be in a somewhat lethargic state, he stopped suddenly in the midst of his discourse, and casting his eyes around him, remarked that they were talking about building another meeting-house, but he did not know as it was worth while, as the timbers appeared to be in a pretty good condition, and he was sure "the *sleepers* were *sound*."

His most intimate clerical friends were Dr. Emmons of Franklin, for whose theological opinions he entertained the most profound respect; Dr. Ide of Medway, Mr. Rockwood of Westboro', Mr. Wood of Upton, and Mr. Long of Milford. Of the latter gentleman, he once observed, on introducing him to an association of clergymen, "He is a man who has but *one fault;* he never agrees with me in opinion, only when he thinks I 'm right." With these ministers his "pulpit exchanges" were usually made; in their society his social qualities shone forth in all their lustre, and by their counsel and advice he was the better enabled to fulfil the arduous duties of his vocation. In referring to his intercourse with Mr. Howe, one of the above-mentioned clergymen remarks:—

"At the first interview, I received the impression, that *unaffected affability* was a prominent trait in his character. That first impression was never afterwards effaced, but, on the contrary, was strengthened by long and intimate acquaintance. Another trait in his character was *open-hearted sincerity*. Deception had no place in his composition. In his intercourse with his friends, he was perfectly transparent. When we heard him speak, we knew what he meant. We never found him on any other ground than that which he professed to occupy, unless, on a review, he was convinced of incorrectness, and in that case he was always ingenuous to *admit* and to *express* such conviction; for *truth* seemed ever to be his prime object.

"He *generally* possessed a flow of cheerful spirits, and in his intercourse with confidential friends, when he had no apprehension of ill effects, he would sometimes indulge in flashes of wit which they were not prepared to anticipate. Yet, notwithstanding the general maxim, that 'ready wit and sound judgment are seldom found to meet in the same person,' his opinions in matters of weight and importance were often sought, and always respected, both by his people and by ministers around him. He possessed a quickness of apprehension and perspicuity of expression which rendered his communications acceptable and useful."

As a matter of conscience, he confined his "exchanges" to ministers of his own denomination; and when, on a certain occasion, some disaffected members of the parish obtained the use of the church, and employed a Unitarian clergyman to preach at a third service, Mr. Howe himself attended, and, as soon as the speaker had finished his discourse, went up into the pulpit, invited him and the audience to remain, and then, taking for

his text the passage, "*How then must this Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be,*" handled his subject in a most masterly manner, and by this manœuvre, "put an end," as some one expresses it, "to Unitarian preaching in Hopkinton to this day."

Though he believed that Unitarians were laboring under a great and fundamental error, he nevertheless always exercised a spirit of tolerance with regard to them. He was no bigot. "Who cannot see," he exclaims in one of his discourses, "that we are all upon a level, as it respects religious freedom," — just where the Constitution of the State places us? — just where the God of nature has placed us? — and just where we may be *happy*, if we will only put away *ill-nature*, *backbiting*, and *slander?*"

Erroneous denominations are to be put down, he continues, not by calumny, "but by doing better than they do; by rising above them by dint of merit."

In January, 1830, the new meeting-house in Hopkinton was dedicated, — Mr. Howe preaching a memorable sermon on the occasion, — and in April, of the same year, it was proposed to him, that, in consequence of his increasing infirmities, a colleague should be appointed to assist him in the work of the ministry. In his characteristic reply to this proposal, he says: "To this (the appointment of a colleague) I freely consent; because, should I in any measure recover my health, it is not to be expected at my period of life, and with my infirmities, that I could do what you need to have done in my profession. As I have been your minister for upwards of 38 years; as I am unable to support myself by labor; as my wife has been lame for more than ten years; as my worldly circumstances are far less favorable than are generally supposed; as I stand in as much need of my full salary as at any former period; as I was settled for life, and as the legislature have enacted a law, that ministers shall be subject to taxation, which was not expected, either by you or by me, at the time of my settlement; it would seem as though you would not wish me to relinquish any part of my salary.

"But for the good of the parish, if they will settle a colleague pastor, I will relinquish one hundred dollars of my salary annually, on and after the day of his ordination, and also all the ministerial wood-land; all the pasture-land north of the meeting-house, and all the meadow-land, amounting to sixty acres, reserving only for myself $133 38 of my annual salary, and also the forty-acre lot of land, near to my house, during my natural life."

When Mr. Howe, in former times, had asked the town for more salary, he was met by the reply, that "a bargain is a bargain," and, if he had made a poor one, he must stand by it; but now, when he is called on to relinquish a portion of his income, which he might legally retain, instead of replying, that "a bargain is a bargain," he cheerfully accedes to the proposal of the town, and remits to it a large part of what was actually his due. This was noble; and it goes to show that, in all his conflicts with the town, the good of the people was the dearest object of his heart.

The Rev. Amos Phelps was ordained as colleague with him, on the 14th of September, 1830, and continued to labor with him, until May 1, 1832, when, by his dismission, Mr. Howe became again the sole pastor of the church, and received again his full salary.[1] His health, however, continuing feeble, the Rev. Jeffries Hall was ordained as colleague with him, in 1833.[2]

Acting in accordance with his favorite maxim, that "it is better to wear out than to rust out," he now continued, though suffering from the inroads of disease, to visit his parishioners, to dispense his charities among the poor, to look after the concerns of his farm, and to preach occasionally, for several successive years. He lived on the most friendly terms with his colleagues; and, sustained by those great truths which he had so faithfully promulgated, he passed quietly down the vale of life; dispensing, like a fine setting sun, his most hallowed radiance, as he left the world. His last sermon was preached at Franklin, December 25, 1836, from Gal. 1: 10, "*For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ;*" and his last public service was the prayer, remarkable for its fervency and appropriateness, at the installation of the Rev. Mr. Brigham at Framingham. His mind was tranquil and composed during his last sickness, which was very distressful and severe. His death occurred on the 15th of February, 1837, in the 73d year of his age, and in the 46th year of his ministry.[3] His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Ide of Medway.

The publications of Mr. Howe are as follows, namely: —

1. "A Sermon preached at Hopkinton, on Lord's day, Feb. 28, 1808, occasioned by the death of three persons the week preceding its delivery."

2. "A Century Sermon, delivered in Hopkinton, Mass., on Lord's day, Dec. 24, 1815." This is an original production; a diamond of the first water. It is an honest transcript of what an honest man thought; and is the best biography which can ever be written of him. It was very favorably noticed, on its first appearance, by the North American Review, and by the newspapers generally. It has passed through several editions, and has been translated into foreign languages. Perhaps no sermon ever published in New

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1 Mr. Howe, at this time, relinquished to the town, for $30 per annum, his right to the sixty acres of "ministerial land," which had again come into his possession.

2 Mr. Hall was dismissed, May 22, 1838, and the Rev. John C. Webster, the present efficient pastor, was installed in December of the same year.

3 His wife, a lady every way qualified for the duties of her station, died on the 10th of December, 1843. One of her intimate acquaintances thus speaks of her; and all who knew her will acknowledge the description just: —

"I ever viewed her as a person of superior mind, quick perception, peculiar energy, and unconquerable fortitude and resolution. She was as distinguished as her husband, for unaffected affability, unwavering and affectionate friendship, as well as for correct thinking, keen penetration, and sound judgment. Her judicious management in her domestic concerns often prevented the family, with its limited support, from being plunged into embarrassment.

"But the brightest trait in her character was her unostentatious piety. She was decidedly averse to all Pharisaical display in religion; but she was always ready to unite, with deep interest, in conversation with Christian friends on the subject; and was feelingly alive to the importance of *possessing* as well as *professing* true piety."

England, is more generally known. Many of its expressions have become proverbial; many of its pages as familiar to the ear as "household words."

3. "A Sermon on the Design of John's Baptism, delivered at Foxborough, before the Mendon Association, Oct. 6, 1819."

4. "An Attempt to prove that John's Baptism was not Gospel Baptism; being a Reply to Dr. Baldwin's Essay on the same subject." Printed by Flagg and Gould, at Andover, 1820.

5. "A Catechism, extracted chiefly from the Assembly's Catechism. To which are added Miscellaneous Questions, concisely answered, and a Chapter of Proverbs for common life, for the Children under his pastoral care." Boston, Perkins and Marvin, 1834.

In these questions and proverbs, Mr. Howe has pithily expressed a good deal of that practical wisdom by which his life was guided. The following may be taken as a fair specimen of them: —

Question. "Who are wise?"

Answer. "None but such as are determined to be wiser still."

Q. "What is the reason *that man* is so unhappy in his family?"

A. "Because he keeps a bottle of rum in his house."

Q. "What hurt does that do?"

A. "No hurt at all, if he would let it alone."

Q. "What has the rich man more than the poor?"

A. "Nothing, but what God has given him."

Q. "What reason has he, then, to exult over the poor?"

A. "No reason at all."

Q. "Who are the rich?"

A. "All such as have health, peace, and liberty, and none to make them afraid."

Q. "What is the reason *that man* is more prosperous than his neighbor?"

A. "Because he always takes care of little things; he lets nothing be lost, strikes when the iron is hot, and keeps his dish right-side up."

Of the proverbs, the following are quite characteristic.

"To *do* nothing, is the way to *be* nothing."

"Leisure is time for doing something useful."

"The careless man is seldom fortunate."

"Would you have a faithful servant, and one that suits you, *serve yourself.*"

"If you will not hear reason, she will rap your knuckles."

"A dead fish can swim with the stream, but a living one only can swim against it."

"He who marries for money, buys money too dear."

"Great minds are always candid."

"Common sense is the best sense in the world."

"Many things can be proved by facts, that never happened."

"Whoever does not feel himself to be a sinner, cannot be a Christian."

"We can enjoy nothing but what God is pleased to give us."

"We can lose nothing but what he sees fit to take away."

"We can suffer nothing but what he lays upon us."

"Finally: Dr. Witherspoon said, in the conclusion of one of his sermons, delivered in the summer of 1785, *in my hearing*, to the best of my recollection: 'Almost to hit the mark, is really to miss it. Almost to be a saint, is to be an unconverted sinner; and almost to obtain salvation, is to drop into hell and be miserable forever.'"

It was a frequent saying of Mr. Howe, that *two* crimes are invariably followed by the curse of God in this life, namely; that of "deceiving, in the promise of marriage; and that of treating parents cruelly, when poor, old, and feeble."

The church of Hopkinton remained united in doctrine during his ministry; and "always governed," as he quaintly remarked, "its members; and not the individual members, the church." The whole number of persons admitted to it, under him, was 245; and the number excommunicated, 13. It was a maxim with him, that churches are more in danger of becoming too large, than too small; and he therefore always exercised great caution and discrimination in regard to the admission of new members.

As a preacher, Mr. Howe was unaffected, plain, and impressive. His sermons were often composed during the toil of the day, and committed to paper after his family had retired to rest at night; and though, for this reason, sometimes wanting in respect to style, they always contained important thought and sound divinity, and were so constructed as to be easily retained in memory. He never aspired to be eloquent or fine, but to be useful; he knew his "vein," and had the wit to follow it. Though not what in fashionable language would be called a "great preacher," he was certainly an original and effective one. In prayer, his language was remarkably fervent and appropriate to the occasion. He was, indeed, in the words of Cowper, in all the business of his sacred office,

> "———————— simple, grave, sincere;
> In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
> And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
> And natural in gesture; much impressed
> Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
> And anxious mainly that the flock he fed
> Might feel it too; affectionate in look,
> And tender in address, as well becomes
> A messenger of grace to guilty men."

His system of religious faith is given in his "Century Sermon;" and corresponds in general with that of Dr. Emmons and of the other members of the Mendon Association of ministers of his day. He was decidedly opposed

to all " new measures" and innovations in theology, as being at variance with the spirit and simplicity of the gospel. Nothing answered to his ideas of true religion but such affections of the heart as resulted in a good life.

Perhaps no man ever practised more scrupulously what he taught, than Mr. Howe. His life was a running comment on his doctrine, flowing from it as a river from its fountain-head.

" He was a man among the few,
Sincere on Virtue's side ;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
To hourly use applied."

He was frequent in his visits to the widow, the fatherless, and the unfortunate ; and he usually took with him, as he went, some substantial tokens of his sympathy.

His charities were bestowed discriminately, and in such a manner as to fulfil the gospel injunction, " Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." He is known to have risen and carried provision to the poor by night, in order that he might " not be seen of men."

Passing the house of a parishioner one day, who had been reduced from affluence to poverty, and seeing but one stick of wood at the door, he went immediately to his wood-lot and returned with a load of wood, which he told the woman he had come to sell to her. " I have no money," said she, " to pay for it." " I do not ask but one cent for it," replied Mr. Howe ; and exacting this, he unloaded the wood at her door and departed.

Many and many a time has the sick man, whose means of support had been exhausted, and who knew not whence the next dinner for his " little ones" was to come, had his eye moistened, and his heart cheered, by a timely visit from Mr. Howe and his excellent lady, bringing with them various articles of food and raiment to replenish his empty store.

After supplying a poor family with two loads of wood one winter, he brought a third, and leaving it at some distance from the house, desired them to use it, if they needed it, but if not, to let it remain. Seeing at length that it was not taken, he came and removed it to the door of another family who were in greater want of it. By acts like these, many more of which I might relate, he " improved " his " ministerial land," his " people," and his own heart.

But while he was thus beneficent towards the meritorious poor, he was equally severe in reproving the wayward and the indolent.

It is related, that a pig was once given him on condition that he should tell the donor all his faults. He continued from time to time to do so, until the giver was *more* than satisfied, and thinking to pay back something in the same coin, began to tell Mr. Howe what *he* had done wrong. " Stop, stop," said his pastor, " you are too fast ; you must wait till *I* have given *you* a pig, and *then* you may tell me my faults."

As a citizen, he was punctual in the fulfilment of all his engagements, and ready at all times to bear his full proportion of the burdens of the town. To his public spirit and liberal-minded policy all will testify; the public good, was his good; the prosperity of the people, his chief delight.

As a husband and father, he was uniformly kind and affectionate. He trained his family up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and, by the well-ordered and systematic arrangements of his household, exerted a most benign influence upon the other families of the town.

He was constant in his friendships, social and amiable in his disposition, and a lover of good men, especially of ministers of the gospel. "He received them," says one of them, "with great cordiality at his house, and made them welcome to its hospitalities. They will never forget the attachment which he has manifested to them, and the affectionate kindness with which he has uniformly treated them." But the crowning excellence in his character was his sacred regard for truth. He seemed, in the words of Bishop Berkeley, "to dedicate his age, as well as youth, — the latter growth, as well as the first-fruits, — at the altar of Truth." Of this noble trait in his character, an intimate acquaintance thus speaks: "Truth was precious in his eyes. He always felt himself under obligation to answer every expectation which he designedly raised. Everything like equivocation, deception, or falsehood, he seemed intuitively to abhor. He was rightly named "Nathanael," for he was "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." He loved the truth, more than he feared the face of man. He would declare the truth with as little reserve, and with as much apparent readiness when he saw its disclosure was against him, as when he knew it would favor his interest. I have known but very few men who at all times, both in words and actions, adhered so strictly to simple verity, as Mr. Howe. If he made an appointment, you might depend upon seeing him at the place, and at the time, unless a special providence prevented. When he made a statement of facts, you might rest assured that there was no intentional exaggeration, or concealment. If he made a contract with you, or gave you his word on any subject whatever, you might depend upon its timely and faithful fulfilment. Every body that knew him, knew that he would do and say what he thought would be right, whether it was advantageous or disadvantageous to himself; pleasing or displeasing to others. This is as great as it is a rare excellence of character. Whatever may be thought or said of Mr. Howe in other respects, his love of truth and uniform integrity of character will never be forgotten, and never cease to be respected."

Such was the life and character of the Rev. Nathanael Howe. That he had imperfections, cannot be denied; but few men ever had less of them. He spoke forth his "word" for God and humanity without fear; he carried that "word" into practice in his life; he died in the hope of glory, and left a character behind him, which will shine the brighter as men shall examine it the more.

CENTURY SERMON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The author had no reason to expect, when he wrote and delivered this Sermon, that it would be requested for the press. However, as it has been requested, he consents it should be made public: with this impression full upon his mind, that no person will think he has aimed at any thing more than truth, impartiality, perspicuity, and precision. As it may occasion unpleasant feelings in the minds of some of his people, he requests them to consider, that it is as suitable to discover engagedness for the cause of truth, as to go to law for the sake of justice, or take physic for the sake of health.

The author, therefore, dedicates this Discourse to the people of his charge, with his best wishes for their peace, prosperity, and eternal happiness.

N. B. The author consents to a second edition of his Century Sermon, to gratify some friends; to counteract the mistakes of the reviewer in the Evening Gazette; and to credit his people for an unusual instance of liberality in giving him an elegant suit of clothes,[1] immediately after the Sermon was delivered.

☞The public are presented with a third edition of this Sermon, because it has been out of print for years: and has been more frequently inquired for lately than formerly.

As the North American Review has been pleased to take some notice of it, and to make some extracts from it; the author deems it no more than equitable that he makes some extracts from that Review.

In the North American Review, November No. 1816, we read as follows:—

"It has been our lot to read more polished Sermons than the present, but never one half so abounding in plainness and originality. It is a unique specimen, and beyond all price. That it should have been delivered is remarkable,—that it should have been printed still more so; particularly as it was printed by request and dedicated to the parish, with affectionate 'wishes for their peace, prosperity, and eternal happiness.' The text taken for the motto in the title-page, which is not that of the Discourse, is admirably chosen. We shall make some extracts, but almost every page of it will reward a perusal."— H.

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[1] The amount subscribed for the "suit of clothes," was $ 67. — N.

SERMON.

ECCLESIASTES 1 : 4.

ONE GENERATION PASSETH AWAY, AND ANOTHER GENERATION COMETH: BUT THE EARTH ABIDETH FOREVER.

WE live in a changing world; this truth is evident from our text, from our observation, and from our experience.

We have no need of going to the Bible to discover, that one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; we know it by our own observation. Where are the people who were old, twenty-five years ago? They are dead, with only one exception. I remember that Mr. Joseph Cody[1] was an old man when I first saw him. All the rest are dead!

Where are those who were twenty-five years ago in the midst of life, active, useful, and promising? All who are living, have now become old, and are drawing toward the grave; for the grey hairs are growing thick upon their heads.

Where are those who were young twenty-five years ago? They have come forward to the midst of life,

[1] Mr. Joseph Cody, son of Isaac Cody and Hannah Caryl, who were among the earliest settlers of Hopkinton, was born in 1736, and was consequently fifty-five years old at the time of Mr. Howe's settlement in 1791. — N.

and fill the most active, honorable, and useful stations. Some of them are deacons of the church; magistrates of the commonwealth; selectmen of the town; military officers of various grades; and others in more private stations, acting in different town offices; members of civil society; heads of families, etc.

And what shall I say more? Shall I say that more than half our inhabitants have been born within that time?

It now lacks less than twenty-five days of twenty-five years, since my first coming to this place, to preach to this people. At that time, I had only arrived to a state of manhood; I had youth, activity, and a considerable share of sprightliness on my side; I am now old. I have lived to see more than half a century; the grey hairs are growing upon my head; the grinders cease because they are few; the keepers of the house tremble; my infirmities indicate, that I have but a few more years, or months, or days to live!

Is it not evident, *then*, that we live in a changing world? Is it not evident that one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever?

If we appeal to our own experience, we shall find that we live in a changing world. The seasons of the year are changing. Our circumstances are changing. Our relations are changing. The inhabitants of the world are changing. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever.

There was formerly a man living in the kingdom of Great Britain, whose name was Edward Hopkins.[1]

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[1] Edward Hopkins, in honor of whom the town of Hopkinton received its name, was born in Shrewsbury, England, A. D. 1600.

He was bred a merchant, and married the daughter of Theophilus Eaton, Esq.,

This man was *not* one of those ignorant, selfish, narrow-contracted souls, who could think of nothing but himself, his family, and friends. He could think of America; an infant country, though it was three thousand miles distant. He could think of the benefits of education. His enlarged mind took into view the difficulties of educating youth, in an infant country, to fill important stations in church and state.

In the year 1636, the General Court granted £400 to erect a college within the commonwealth. The next year they voted that the college should be erected in that part of Newtown, which is now Cambridge. The year following they decreed that the college should be called Harvard College, in honor of the Rev. John Harvard, who had bequeathed his library and upwards of £700 for the benefit of the college.

In the year 1642, the General Court established a Board of Overseers. In 1650, the charter of the corporation was granted. And in the year 1657, Edward Hopkins, Esq. made his will.

The Father of spirits had not only endowed 'Squire

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with whom he removed to New England, in 1637. He was made governor of Connecticut every other year, from 1640 to 1654; after which he returned to England, and was chosen commissioner of the admiralty, and navy; and also member of parliament.

He died at London, in 1657, leaving a will, in which he ordered that £500 of his estate in England should be remitted to New England, within six months after the death of his wife, Anna; and which, as he expresses it, "is in the simplicity of my heart for the upholding and promoting of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus in those parts."

Anna Hopkins, died in December, 1698, and the donation of £500, together with the interest thereon, was by a decree in chancery (1710) ordered to be laid out in a purchase of land in New England.

Pursuant to this decree, the trustees of the donation laid out £800 in the purchase of the land which now, for the most part, constitutes the towns of Hopkinton and Ashland.

The tract of land formerly occupied by the "praying Indians," and called "Magunco," embraced, according to an old chart, 1,152 acres, and was purchased of the Indians in 1710 or 1711. The remainder of the town was obtained by grant of the general court. — N.

Hopkins with an enlarged mind, but he had given him a great estate; and what was of vastly more importance, he had given him a benevolent heart.

'Squire Hopkins was a man of great wealth; his estate was estimated at £20,000 sterling; equal in value to $88,888 88. Eight hundred pounds sterling of this property was given to be laid out in lands, three fourths for the benefit of the college, and one fourth for the benefit of the Grammar school in Cambridge. That is to say, $2,666 66 were given to the college, and $888 88 to the Grammar school in Cambridge. This was given "for the breeding up of youth in the way of learning, for the public service of the country in future times." — "For the upholding and propagating of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ." These are expressions taken from the will of Edward Hopkins, Esq. In the year 1710, it was ordered that this money should be laid out in lands. This donation of 'Squire Hopkins to Harvard College was the money which first purchased Hopkinton, which in its original state contained what is now called Hopkinton, about three thousand acres of Upton, and five hundred acres of Holliston. The lands began to be settled between 1710, and 1712.[1] On the 13th day of Decem-

[1] Although the act of incorporation was passed in 1715, the inhabitants did not take upon themselves the "powers and privileges" of a town, until March 25, 1724, O. S., when the government was organized by the choice of the following officers, namely, John How, John Wood, Henry Mellen, Joseph Haven, and James Collar, Selectmen; John How, Town Clerk; Elnathan Allen, Treasurer; Samuel Watkins and Benjamin Burnap, Constables.

The town was first represented in General Court by Captain (afterwards Colonel) John Jones, in 1735, who continued to be sent as representative until 1767, when Captain Joseph Mellen was elected.

A plantation eastward of "Magunco Hill," containing 631 acres, surveyed for Savill Simpson, cordwainer, Boston, in 1689, (the original plat of which is in my possession,) is probably the first tract of land taken up and occupied as a farm in the town.

This land afterwards came into the possession of Colonel John Jones, who married Hannah, daughter of Savill Simpson, and thence into the hands of their son,

ber, (old style,) which, according to the present mode of reckoning, brings it to the 24th day of December, 1715, this town was incorporated. This day, therefore, is the beginning of a new century to the inhabitants of this place.

As the town was purchased by the donation of 'Squire Hopkins to Harvard College, the lands were to be leased out to tenants, at one penny sterling per acre, to be paid annually to the college to the year 1823, and threepence of like money afterwards. Twelve thousand five hundred acres were to be leased out to tenants; the residue to be common land,[1] to be divided among the tenants to enable them the better to pay the quitrents; and moreover, the tenants were to pay a province tax, for what they were worth, above the rents reserved.

It is natural to suppose these considerations would lead many people in indigent circumstances to come, and to settle here; the town, therefore, increased rapidly in population for a number of years.

May 21, 1723. The town "voted to have preaching constantly on the Sabbath." May 20, 1724, they voted to give Mr. Barrett "sixty pounds, in day-labor, oxen's work, boards, shingles, clapboards, slitwork, and other materials to build him a house,[2] and if not paid in those articles to be paid in money." The same day they voted to give Mr. Barrett £35, in addition to the cutting and carting his firewood for three years; and £70 afterwards, with the cutting and carting his fire-

Col. John Jones, one of whose daughters was the wife of the Rev. Mr. Howe. It is believed that "White Hall" and "Rockwood's Farm" were the next places occupied. — N.

[1] The "common land" was then estimated at about 10,000 acres, exclusive of the "cedar swamps," and was to be divided among the tenants in proportion to the number of acres each had rented. — N.

[2] June 30, 1724. The trustees of Hopkins's donation voted £30 to Mr. Barrett, "towards building his house upon his own land." — N.

wood, to be his annual salary during his ministry. On the 2d day of September following, a Congregational church [1] was gathered, consisting of fifteen members. Their names were, Samuel Barrett, Samuel Wadkins, William Montgomery, Robert Hamilton, Samuel Wark, Benjamin Burnap, Robert Cook, Elnathan Allen, John Wood, Joseph Haven, Robert Huston, William Dunaghoi, Patrick Hamilton, Obediah Allen, and Jacob Gibbs. These were the only members of the church when it was formed. The same day, the Rev. Samuel Barrett, a native of Boston, who graduated at Harvard College in 1721, was ordained pastor of said church. This was at a period of our

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[1] The meetings of the Church were held at the house of Mr. John How, at which place Mr. Barrett was ordained, and continued to preach, until "the meeting-house" was erected.

Those who have with the writer, occupied "seats" in that venerable "meeting-house," will pardon him for introducing here a few extracts from the town record, touching the history of a building, around which his "earliest, fondest, memories cling."

Immediately after the formation of the Church, measures were taken by the town to provide a suitable place for public worship, and at a meeting held January 5, 1724–5 (old style), a committee was chosen "to provide ye timber for ye meeting-house, and to frame it, improving ye people of ye town, to work out their rates." It was also voted, that "the house shall be 48 feet long, 38 feet wide, and 20 feet between the joists."

In June, 1725, three places were selected, upon which "to set ye meeting-house," and, casting lots thereupon, "it fell upon that place south of ye burying-ground."

November 29th, of the same year, it was voted "to raise ye meeting-house with spike-poles," and £10 were granted for the purpose.

In May, 1727, it was voted, that "Mr. John Jones' pew may be 7½ feet long, and 5 feet wide, and that there should be a 'ministerial pew,' on the north side of the west door."

February 1, 1727–8, voted "to build two bodies of seats on ye floor of ye meeting-house, one for men, and ye other for women."

September 25, 1732. It was voted "to seat ye meeting-house by this year's and last year's rate," and that "it is esteemed, ye fore seats below to be ye highest in dignity; and ye second seat below and ye fore seat in ye front gallery, equal," &c.

November 1, 1751. It was voted "to make a seat between ye deacon seat and ye pulpit, for persons hard of hearing to set in."

November 9, 1759. Voted "to sundry young women, liberty to build a pew behind the hind seat, the whole length of the women's gallery."

This "meeting-house" was used for public worship, town meetings, &c., until 1829, when the present handsome and commodious building was erected. — N.

country when ministers were respected, public worship attended, family religion and family government were maintained, morality and piety prevailed.

But in the course of a few years a dissension took place; a large number had been admitted to communion; some of whom proved themselves unworthy of their Christian standing.

It appears on record, that on the ninth day of April, 1731, the church voted to comply with the Cambridge Platform of church discipline. This gave great offence. James Montgomery and his mother, Robert Cook and his wife, William Hinry, Walter Stewart, Robert Huston and his wife, John Hamilton, Robert Barrett, and the widow Hamilton, and others, absented themselves from communion. The elders, therefore, were sent by the church to inquire of these delinquents, the reasons of their absenting themselves from the Lord's supper: They replied, they had laid the matter before ministers, and if their advice was such as they could not comply with, they meant to leave the town.

When the church insisted on knowing their reasons, it was replied, that the church had altered their mode of government; that they had received members from Framingham without a dismission; and that they were not under obligations to keep covenant with such a church.[1]

On June 14, 1732, Joseph Bixby and Joseph Haven were ordained to the office of ruling elders in the church. Also Benjamin Burnap and Henry Mellen were ordained deacons. On this occasion, the Rev. Thomas Prince, and the Rev. John Webb, both pas-

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[1] Robert Cook said "that he desired no dismission from ye church; but that ye church ought to ask a dismission from him." Robert Barrett, and wife, together with several others, who had been disaffected, gave "satisfaction," and returned to the church in January 7, 1735. — N.

tors of churches in the town of Boston, were present and assisted.

This, with the other causes before mentioned, led part of the members of the church to separate, and absent themselves from communion. These offended brethren formed a society, built a meeting-house,[1] and maintained their separation for a number of years. There is no account that they ever had a minister. It is more than probable, that they met together, sung, prayed, and exhorted one another. But in process of time, their zeal abated, their society dwindled, their meeting-house decayed, some died, others sold and removed; and a number of years after they had been admonished and suspended by the church, those who remained in town returned, made concessions to the church, and were restored to their former standing, and admitted to communion.

Thus we see that this society, formed by prejudice and passion, when the fever of the moment had abated, sunk and disappeared.

This difficulty, however, which originated in the year 1731, was not completely settled till the year 1738.

As the Rev. Samuel Barrett's ministry was lengthy, honorable, and successful, I shall divide it into five different periods of ten years each, except the last, which was about eight years and three months.

In the first ten years of his ministry, there were 146 admitted to full communion;[2] 58 owned the covenant; 206 received the ordinance of baptism; and 41 couples were joined in marriage.

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[1] This meeting-house stood near the dwelling-house of Walter McFarland, Esq. — N.

[2] The first person admitted into full communion with the church, was Mrs. Martha Gibbs, October 25, 1724. She died April 29, 1747, aged 43. — N.

In the second ten years of his ministry there was a difficulty existing between this church and the churches of Framingham and Shrewsbury, respecting the admission of members from those churches who had not been regularly recommended and dismissed. After repeated exertions to settle it, a council was called, consisting of the Rev. Mr. Cheever of *Rumney-Marsh*,[1] Rev. Mr. Moody of York, Rev. Mr. Wise of Berwick, Rev. Mr. White of Gloucester, Rev. Messrs. Thatcher, Webb, Dr. Sewall, Prince, Gee, and Mather, pastors of churches in the town of Boston, with their delegates.

The 25th day of June, 1735, was appointed for the council to meet. When it was ascertained that this large, learned, and venerable ecclesiastical council could not be convened, on account of the distance, season of the year, etc. the church voted to strike out Mr. Moody, Mr. White, and Mr. Wise, and send to the church in Sudbury ; but the council were providentially detained from meeting. The church then voted to send again to the same council, with the addition of the church in Berwick. *Voted*, That the third Wednesday of September be the time for the council to meet. Voted, also, to add Mr. Moody, and his son from York, to the council.

This ecclesiastical council convened at the time and place, and after mature consideration of the subject, they resulted in favor of the doings of this church. The church voted thanks to the council, requested the Rev. Mr. Gee of Boston to be present at the reading of the result, and voted to comply with the result of the council.

In this period, that is, from Sept. 2, 1734 to Sept.

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[1] Now *Chelsea*. — H.

2, 1744, there were 90 admitted to full communion, 42 owned the covenant, 289 were baptized, and 44 couples were joined in marriage.

In the third period of ten years of the Rev. Mr. Barrett's ministry, there were troublous times. Mr. Whitefield,[1] Buel, Tennant, and other ministers were travelling through the country, and preaching with uncommon animation and success. No doubt, by their doctrines, zeal, and oratory, they did vast good; but like all other human beings, they were imperfect, and sometimes indiscreet. Mr. Whitefield acknowledged very freely, the last time[2] he travelled through the country, that he had done *wrong*, in speaking against the standing order of ministers as he had done formerly; that he should not have done it, had he been more acquainted with them. These animated, ardent preachers, drew away the affections of many people from their own ministers.

At this time Mr. Barrett, *for a season*, lost the confidence and affections of some of the most serious and pious people in town. The late Deacon Moses Haven and others, absented themselves from Mr. Barrett's ministry, and joined with the Rev. Mr. Reed's society in Framingham; sometimes hearing him, and sometimes the Rev. Mr. Frost of Milford: but when the fervor of their affection abated, they returned to this Society, respected Mr. Barrett, lived under his ministry, and were edified. About this time the Rev. Roger Price,[3] a clergyman of the Episcopalian order, came to

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[1] Mr. Whitefield preached once in Hopkinton, in the autumn of 1740, on the common, in the open air; and in allusion to Mr. Barrett, whom he held in great contempt, he prayed, that "that dumb dog might have power to bark." — N.

[2] In 1769. — N.

[3] The Rev. Roger Price, commissary of the Bishop of London, was appointed rector of King's Chapel, Boston, in 1729; which office he held until 1747, when he returned to England in the "Mermaid man-of-war." Sir Henry Frankland, whose

this town, purchased a large tract of land, built a church, and endowed it with a glebe containing one hundred and seventy acres; preached here about three years, and returned to England. Soon after this, he sent the Rev. Mr. Troutbeck,[1] who officiated here for some time, and then removed. Since his removal, there have been only a few solitary instances of that mode of worship for nearly sixty years.[2] I have never heard but what the Rev. Mr. Barrett and the Rev. Mr. Price lived in great harmony, though they were of different religious denominations, and lived within a few rods of each other. And we have the more reason to believe this, from the circumstance, that the descendants of the Rev. Mr. Price have been unusually kind and beneficent to the descendants of the Rev. Mr. Barrett. During this period, that is, from Sept. 2, 1744 to Sept. 2, 1754, 26 were admitted to full communion, 43 owned the covenant, 288 were baptized, and 44 couples were joined in marriage.

In the fourth period of ten years of the Rev. Mr. Barrett's ministry, that is, from Sept. 2, 1754 to Sept. 2, 1764, the state of this people was more tranquil and happy. Mr. Barrett's character was established, his wisdom had been manifested, and his stability was undoubted. He had sustained the office of a gospel minister for thirty years. He had stood firm and unshaken through times of violence, intrigue, and faction. Neither contention, nor division, nor separation, could divert him from his course. Mr. Barrett was not an

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romantic history would make an entertaining volume, built a Manor-house in Hopkinton, about the middle of the last century; and, together with a few other churchmen, sustained the Rev. Mr. Price in his endeavors to establish an Episcopal church in the town. — N.

[1] Appointed assistant rector of King's Chapel in 1755, which office he held until 1776. Vide Greenwood's History of King's Chapel. — N.

[2] Some years since, a new church was erected, and public worship is attended some part of the time. — H.

animated preacher, but he was sensible, orthodox, and exemplary. The Historical Society of Massachusetts have published his character as follows: "He was a pious, good Christian, a man of great candor, and good-nature." This appears to me, in some measure, to fall short of his real excellence; they might have added, a man of great stability and perseverance.[1]

In this period, he admitted 31 persons to full communion, 72 owned the covenant, 337 were baptized, and 70 couples were joined in marriage.

In the last period of the Rev. Mr. Barrett's ministry, which consisted of eight years and three months, his activity abated; his faculties were diminished; but in this period he admitted 15 persons to full communion, 32 owned the covenant, 193 were baptized, 52 couples were joined in marriage, but we have no account of deaths.

Mr. Barrett called a church meeting, Dec. 2, 1771, for the purpose of choosing a colleague pastor to assist him in the decline of life. But "by reason of age and infirmity," as the records state, he was unable to preside at said meeting; however, the church proceeded, and unanimously made choice of Mr. Elijah Fitch for a colleague pastor. On the 15th day of January 1772, the Rev. Elijah Fitch was ordained; and on the 11th

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[1] The Rev. Samuel Barrett was born in Boston, A. D. 1700, and died Dec. 11, 1772, aged 72. His wife, ANNA, died Oct. 19, 1771, aged 69. SAMUEL, their only child, was born in 1726, was married to Mary Caswell, Feb. 9, 1758, and died, March 10, 1800, leaving two children, JOHN, born 1759, and ANNA, in 1761. Anna was married to Thomas Freeland, Jr., in 1781. John was a good classical scholar, and was by profession what might be termed an "itinerating schoolmaster." Although wayward and eccentric in his habits, his skill as a teacher was such as to procure him pupils wherever he went. He is the author of an English grammar, which has at least the merit of originality. There is a very humorous "critique," by Edward Everett, on this grammar, in one of the early numbers of the North American Review.

Mr. John Barrett died April 4, 1821, aged 62, leaving two children, ORLANDO and CLARISSA, both of whom are still living.—N.

of the December following, the Rev. Samuel Barrett died, in the seventy-second year of his age, and the forty-ninth year of his ministry. Thus he died, like God's ancient and faithful servant Job, "being old and full of days."

As the trustees of Hopkins's donation to Harvard College gave Mr. Barrett one hundred acres of land, adjoining this meeting-house, for his own personal use and behoof forever, because he was the first minister; so also they gave him another hundred acres of land, which was given to him, his heirs, assigns, and successors; which is called the ministerial land,[1] and is now in my possession. As Mr. Barrett lived at a time when black people were slaves,[2] and had them for servants; and besides this, had in Boston wealthy and benevolent connections, by whose liberality he was furnished with such things as he needed; and in addition to this, had £70, with the cutting and carting his firewood, for his annual salary; we have reason to believe he had a comfortable support, though the people were generally poor. The Rev. Mr. Barrett left but one child, a son, who departed this life March 10, 1800, who was exemplary, industrious, and inoffensive.

The Rev. Elijah Fitch was ordained, as we have before said, on the 15th day of January, 1772; almost eleven months before the death of the Rev. Mr. Barrett. Mr. Fitch was a native of Connecticut; born in the town of Windham; educated at Yale College;

[1] The original vote of the trustees stands recorded thus: —

Feb. 5, 1711, Voted, "To lay out 100 acres of land for the ministry in such convenient place and manner as they shall find most suitable for that use." Voted "that a hundred acres of land shall be laid out for the first minister that shall be ordained and settled in the town, to be for him and his heirs for the term of 99 years from the 25th of March last past, free from paying any rent," and "also that 100 acres shall be laid out for the school, for a training-field, and burying-yard." — N.

[2] The whole number of negro slaves in Hopkinton, in the year 1755, sixteen years of age and upwards, was fifteen. — N.

graduated in the year 1765. He was a man of great powers of mind. He possessed a sound judgment. He was somewhat reserved in mixed companies, but in the pulpit he was remarkably eloquent. He was unassuming; a man of meekness and candor; a man of humility and benevolence; he was patient, industrious, and persevering. His life was spent in one continual series of exertion for the good of his church, people, and family. Perhaps no man, with his advantages and income, could have left his family in better circumstances than he did.

Mr. Fitch was not rigid in his religious opinions; he was considered a moderate Calvinist. He was respected by his own people, and esteemed by the neighboring religious societies. During his ministry, which lacked one month of seventeen years, he admitted 37 persons to full communion, 100 owned the covenant, 422 were baptized, 189 couples were joined in marriage, and in this time there were 316 deaths. In the first year of Mr. Fitch's ministry there were 39 deaths; 20 of them were occasioned by the canker.

In the year 1775, when the army lay in and about Cambridge, there were 45 deaths; 29 of these were occasioned by the dysentery. This was probably the greatest mortality that has taken place in any one year since the town was settled. In the year 1788 there were only ten deaths; the Rev. Elijah Fitch was the last of that number.

When the town voted to concur with the church in giving Mr. Fitch a call to settle with them in the ministry, they gave him $444,44 for his settlement, and $200 annually for his salary. This was at a time when provisions were low, land was cheap, labor easily obtained, and at a moderate price. Within three years of this time, paper money was emitted,

and it depreciated from one degree to another, till Mr. Fitch's salary, for a year, would only pay a common hired man for six months' labor. The Rev. Mr. Fitch was liberally educated,— regularly introduced into the ministry, — necessitated to keep an horse to enable him to discharge the duties of his office, to attend funerals, visit the sick, etc., to board his hired man, and himself, and then his whole salary, for a year, would only pay a hired man for six months' labor!!

Are there no bounds to oppression, injustice, and cruelty? I confess for myself I know of none. This was in the time of the revolutionary war, when our liberties were in danger, and our country in distress; but after the peace, the town had so much sense of honor and duty, as to raise Mr. Fitch's salary from £60 to £70 lawful money, and that continued to be his salary while he lived.

But after Mr. Fitch's death, the town had so little compassion on the widow and fatherless, that they took the ministerial land into their own hands, without any lawful right, and applied the profits of that to their own use, which was given by the trustees of Hopkins's donation to Harvard College, "to the Rev. Samuel Barrett and his successors in the ministry."

However, Mr. Fitch was not only an industrious man himself, but he had an industrious family. He left an amiable and pious widow,[1] and five children. The eldest daughter, who had professed and practised religion while she was well, sickened and died about five years after her father. The eldest son is the Rev. John Fitch of Danville, in the State of Vermont, who has been minister of that town for more than twenty

[1] Since dead. Her maiden name was Hannah Fuller. She died Feb. 7, 1824, at the age of 80. — N.

years, and is now one of the most respectable ministers in that State.[1]

The eldest daughter, now living, is with her mother, and well known to the generality of this assembly. The youngest son is Deacon Elijah Fitch, chosen to that office by an uncommon unanimity, having had all the votes except his own, or all but one except his own. And the youngest daughter is Mrs. Betsey Rawson, the wife of the Rev. Nathanael Rawson of Hardwick, in the State of Vermont.[2]

All amiable characters, all professors of religion, all of one denomination, adorning their profession by a pious life.

Whose descendants can vie with the descendants of the Rev. Elijah Fitch?

It is true, the family were never wealthy, but they have always been respected. Such was the rise, progress, character, and success, and such the descendants, of the Rev. Elijah Fitch.

In the former part of his ministry he enjoyed good health, and an uncommon share of activity; but two years before his death, he was unwell and unable to preach through the winter. In the spring, he recovered partially, was able and continued to preach till the April preceding his death. The Rev. Elijah Fitch lived beloved and died lamented by his numerous acquaintance and friends. He departed this life Dec. 16, 1788, in the forty-third year of his age, and seventeenth year of his ministry.[3]

Thus we see "one generation passeth away, and

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[1] He has since been dismissed. — H.

[2] Since dead. — H.

[3] "No man," says a writer speaking of Mr. Fitch, in the Mass. Hist. Coll., "ever more feelingly participated in the happiness or misery of his fellow-men, than he; or better filled the several offices of pastor, husband, parent, friend, neighbor, and townsman."

Mr. Fitch was a fine scholar and a poet. He left a poem of several cantos in blank

another generation cometh;" and passeth away, "but the earth abideth forever."

Not only the ministers, but the people have been dying from year to year. In the 40 years last past there have been not less than 700 deaths; and is it not reasonable to suppose that in the 60 years preceding there were as many deaths as there have been in the 40 years following? Admitting this to be a reasonable calculation, we may conclude there have been since the incorporation of the town, 1,400 deaths; which is equal to the number of our present inhabitants. After the funeral of the Rev. Mr. Fitch, the bearers supplied for a considerable time, and then candidates were employed.

The Rev. Solomon Adams late of Middleton, deceased, was your first candidate. Rev. Joshua Cushman late of Winslow, Rev. Stephen Baxter late of Western, Rev. Pearson Thurston late of Somersworth, Rev. Alden Bradford, formerly of Wiscasset, now Secretary of State for this Commonwealth,[1] Rev. Gordon Dorrance of Windsor, and a Mr. Stone of Shrewsbury, who preached here four Sabbaths, the two last in December 1790 and the two first in January 1791. The weather was unfavorable, and the travelling bad, and in no one of those Sabbaths were there so many as thirty persons assembled in this house to worship God![2]

At this time your present minister was engaged to come and preach to this people as a candidate. He

verse, entitled the "Beauties of Religion," which contains passages of considerable poetic merit. He also published an eloquent sermon on the war, which breathes forth the true spirit of religious and civil liberty.

The favorite amusements of Mr. Fitch were angling and the chase, in which exercises Dr Wilson, Maj. Price, and other gentlemen of that day, used often to engage with him. — N.

[1] *Late* Secretary of State for this Commonwealth. — H.

[2] The town at this time contained 1,317 inhabitants. — N.

was employed by a committee consisting of Squire M'Farland, Mr. Henry Mellen, and Dr. Stimson, Esq. After preaching here for three months, from the third Sabbath in January, then being absent a few weeks to fulfil a former engagement, he returned to preach to this people, and on the May following, received a unanimous call from the church to settle as their pastor. On May 19th the town "voted to concur with the church, provided Mr. Howe consents to admit children to baptism, whose parents are in the half-way covenant, so called."

The half-way covenant was a scheme devised by our forefathers, assembled in synod, 1662, to determine who were the proper subjects of baptism; and they decided, "that church members, who were admitted in minority, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give up themselves and children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in his church, their children are to be baptized."

This scheme inclined persons, who had no reason to think themselves qualified to partake of the Lord's supper, to make this kind of profession and have their children baptized. At this time, there were probably more than twice the number who belonged to the half-way covenant, than there were who belonged to the church in full communion; for my reverend predecessor had admitted 100 to that covenant, and only 37 to full communion, during his ministry. This call of the town was presented by a large and respectable committee, consisting of Dea. Moses Haven, Mr. Jacob Gibbs, Col. John Jones, Dea. Stephen Kinsman, Mr. Barachias Morse, Col. Nathan Perry, and Maj. William

Price. When the call was presented and read, I took occasion to observe to the committee, that I had never been convinced that the half-way covenant could be supported by Scripture, and I could not consent to baptize in that way, till I was convinced; and if that was a fixed condition in the minds of the town, I could give them an answer at that time as well as any other. Mr. Morse inquired if that was the only objection I had to settling here? to which I answered, it appeared to be the greatest. Upon which it was proposed to have another town meeting, and see what compromise could be made.

When the town assembled, I attended, and when called upon stated, "That no difference in sentiment respecting the half-way covenant, so called, should prevent me from exchanging with any of the regular gospel ministers in this neighborhood; and although it does not appear to me right, to administer the ordinance of baptism in that way,— and I cannot consistently do it before I am convinced it is right, — yet I think I feel myself disposed to give other people the same liberty, with respect to religion, I take for myself.

"Therefore, whenever I exchange, if the minister with whom I exchange thinks he can conscientiously baptize children by the half-way covenant, and those who are in that covenant think they can conscientiously offer their children, I shall not feel myself under obligation to object against their doing what appears to them to be right.

"And that every man may see that I am disposed to be fair and plain, and that no difficulty may ever arise concerning this matter, I say further, that, notwithstanding I am opposed to that practice; yet, if the church and the minister with whom I exchange think proper to take any more into the half-way covenant, I

shall treat them in the same manner I do those who are already in that covenant."

This town meeting was on July 18, 1791, at which time the town voted "to concur with the church in giving Mr. Nathanael Howe a call to be their gospel minister, upon the proposals Mr. Howe has now offered."

Also, "voted to ratify the doings of the town on the 19th of May last, respecting Mr. Howe's settlement and salary;" that was, to give £200 settlement, and £70[1] salary, in addition to the improvement of the ministerial land.

Our pious forefathers, with good intent, no doubt, devised the half-way covenant. Being alarmed at the declining numbers of the church, and the corresponding increase of the unbaptized, depending on human wisdom and distrusting the divine faithfulness, this plan was devised and adopted: and when it was introduced into the churches, it occasioned contentions, divisions, and separations; as you may see by reading Mather's Magnalia. When it was discovered that its tendency was to destroy the church;—for if every person joined in that way, there would be no church;—when it was discovered that its tendency was to injure the persons received, by making them think they had done their duty, when they had not; and to pervert the ordinance of baptism, by administering it to unsuitable subjects;—it was opposed both by ministers and churches. And it occasioned as much contention and opposition to lay it aside, as to introduce it. That erroneous practice is now dead; only 14 have been baptized by that covenant since my ordination; none within 15 years last past; and none have been admitted since my induction to office.

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[1] £70 = $233,33. — N.

In the first year of my ministry, I leased a part of the ministerial common[1] to Maj. Burnap, during my ministry; the said Burnap was to clear the land, fence it, subdue the bushes, and keep the fences in good repair; on these conditions I believed it would be as valuable to my successor, as to myself. This, however, gave great offence. It occasioned a town meeting, which I attended; but previous to the town meeting, I had agreed with Maj. Burnap to rescind the bargain.

The town complained that I was making an unsuitable use of the ministerial common; to which I replied, that the land was lawfully mine, during my ministry, for it was not given to the town, but to "the Rev. Samuel Barrett and his successors." I then complained that the town had been inattentive in their obligations to me; not having paid the salary they promised. For on Nov. 2, 1792, they granted my first year's salary, which was almost a month after the first year expired. And not one cent of the first year's salary had been granted, assessed, or paid; and at that time I owed no man in town a single shilling. This difficulty was settled on Jan. 14, 1793, by my offering to relinquish my right to the ministerial common, on the condition, the town would pay the salary on the day they promised, or put it on interest. This was a good bargain both for me and the town, for it secured to me my salary, at the time appointed, which has been a great benefit; and it secured to the town the ministerial common land, without any expense, provided they punctually fulfilled their obligations to me.[2]

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[1] Land originally taken up by virtue of possessing the "ministerial," which was "quitrent land." See page 25 — N.

[2] No people in Massachusetts, or New England, have been more punctual in paying their minister's salary, for more than twenty years last past, than the people of Hopkinton. — H.

About this time, 'Squire McFarland and Mr. Henry Mellen, two of our principal men, left this Society and joined the Methodists, because they were dissatisfied with the doctrines here delivered. But not finding themselves so agreeably situated as they expected, they returned to this Society. Mr. Mellen is since dead; and 'Squire McFarland[1] has manifested his regard to the Sabbath, and public worship, by attending very constantly, though he has never approved of my religious or political sentiments.[2]

At this time, a brother of the church left our communion, and joined the Methodists: the church dealt with him as an offender, and seeing he did not reform, excommunicated him.

The church passed a vote May 13, 1790, the year before I came to town, that if any should omit praying with their families, or omit public worship, or communion, or be found from time to time disguised with strong drink, they should be under the immediate admonition of the church. It was found that one brother did not pray with his family; he was dealt with as an offender, and seeing he did not reform, was excommunicated.

When the public took sides upon politics, your minister was a Federalist, though he was sensible a very great majority of the town were of different sentiments. He believed then, as he believes now, that he ought to have more regard to his country, than to any particular part of it: and when he has occasionally

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[1] Walter McFarland, Esq., was a gentleman of distinguished abilities, and took a very active part in the cause of liberty during the struggle for our national independence. He was in the army at Ticonderoga in 1776, was elected senator to the General Court in 1787, and died Aug. 5, 1829, at the advanced age of 85. His father attained the age of 100 years. — N.

[2] 'Squire McFarland is at present an Episcopalian, and a professed friend to all religions. — H.

preached political sermons, they have repeatedly occasioned uncomfortable feelings.[1]

Another difficulty your minister has had to encounter, was the want of support. A vast change has taken place, in the expenses of dressing and living since my ordination, and yet no addition has been made to my salary.[2]

When a candidate, I determined I would never settle, till I saw a reasonable prospect of a comfortable support; and when settled, that I would never complain of my salary. I remained of this mind, till I had been your minister for fifteen years.

Borne down with the fatigues of manual labor, pressed into the woods in the winter, to the plough in the spring, and into the meadow in the summer, to support my family comfortably, and fulfil my promises, I felt the business of the ministry was greatly neglected; — that it was impossible for me to do what ought to be done in my profession, unless the people did more toward my support.

I committed my thoughts to paper, then communicated them to four brethren of the church, then to the church as a body, and afterward to the town.

As there has been much misunderstanding, and many misrepresentations upon this matter, I will read it again, and then the doings of the town thereon.

"*To the Brethren of the Church of Christ in Hopkinton.*

"Beloved Brethren:—

"When you gave me a call to settle with you in the gospel ministry, and the town had concurred and made their proposals, I took the matter under

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[1] The Author commenced his political career, when Gov. Sumner was chosen to fill the chair of state [in 1797. — N.], and was one of seven in the town of Hopkinton, who gave him their votes, namely, Col Jones, Maj. Price, Dr. Stimson, Dr. Wilson, Mr. Barachias Morse, Mr. Surrage, and himself. — H.

[2] No addition has been made to my salary, even to this day, though it has been often attempted, without my instrumentality. — H.

serious consideration. I considered the unanimity of the church and town, as favorable circumstances, and the proposals that were made with respect to my support, as reasonable, though not large. The ministerial land I was sensible was good, though the state of cultivation was very bad, and the fences extremely poor. It then appeared to me, if I should be favored with prosperity, with the knowledge I thought I had of agriculture, that I should be able to support a family. With those views I gave my answer in the affirmative, was ordained, and soon had a family. At this time every article of provision was low, labor was cheap, and my income was sufficient for my support. But within two years from my ordination, money began to depreciate, and the price of labor to rise ; my salary has continued depreciating and labor rising, till it is not worth more than half what it was, when I was settled.

"I have always been sensible of the difficulty of transacting money business with any people; and from this impression have labored with my hands, to make provision for my family, and fulfil my promises: I have scarcely ever suffered myself to make any complaints; but I find at present, that my expenses are increasing, and my income decreasing. This has led me into considerable perplexity with respect to my duty. If I ask a dismission and remove, it must be with considerable loss of property. If I remain as I am, I see no reason to expect any better times. If I exert myself more in laboring with my hands, it must be disadvantageous both to you, and me ; for then I must neglect my professional business. If I advertise my house and land for sale, it will appear precipitate. If I propose to the town to purchase it for the next minister, and ask them to dismiss me, I know not how this will operate. I do not *wish to leave the ministry ;* but if I should ever remove, it is full time, for I have probably spent the best part of my life among you. Fifteen years ago, the expense of candidate preaching was four or five dollars a Sabbath ; now it is eight or ten. Then the members of our General Court had one dollar per day, now they have two dollars per day. A common laborer at that time, had $55, or $60 per year ; now they have $130, $140, and some $150 a year.

"Is it reasonable, then, for ministers to be satisfied with the nominal sum, when it is not worth more than half its original value ? I make no pretence to any lawful claim ; but in point of equity, is it not reasonable ? I grant that when two parties have made an agreement, that one cannot dissolve it without the consent of the other. I am sensible it is very difficult for us to know many things except what we know by experience ; and, therefore, it is very difficult for any people to feel for their minister, because they are not in his circumstances. Brethren, we have lived in a good degree of harmony for years past, which I hope will never be interrupted. This Society, perhaps, enjoys as much harmony at present, as at any former period: and are abundantly able to make up the depreciation on my salary, if they are so disposed : but this must depend entirely on their choice.

"In these circumstances, brethren, request your advice. Shall I ask a dismission? Or, shall I ask to have the depreciation made up on my salary? Shall I ask the town to purchase my house and land? Or shall I advertise it in a public paper? Or ought I to remain satisfied as I am?

"It costs me this year $150 for one man's labor, who cannot do my business either winter or summer; and if I add to this sum the reasonable expense of his board, it will amount to as much as the town pay to my support. It will be said that the ministerial land is much more productive than formerly: this is true; but how comes it to pass? Is it not in consequence of the labor and expense I have been at, to cultivate and fence it? Some years I have expended as much on the land, as the whole of the income.

"If it should be said I have other income, I ask: Is it right for me to spend the property that was left to my wife, by her parents, while I am preaching to a people well able to support me? When, perhaps, by and by, she may be left in poverty and distress?

"If a farm be let out at the halves, the buildings and fences will soon be out of repair, and the land impoverished. If all the labor be hired to carry on a farm, and pay the other expenses, the income to the owner will be but small. I say these things to show you my situation, and to convince you that, should I ask a dismission in a few months, you ought not to think it unreasonable. If any should be disposed to make an addition to my salary, on account of the depreciation, this will be likely to make difficulty; the people will not be agreed in it, and beside, no addition would be satisfactory, except it be granted to continue, till such times as labor and provisions fall in their prices as low as when I was ordained; then I would relinquish it: and if they ever fall below what they were then, I will consent to take less than £70 for my salary. I do not say these things, because I think the town would be willing to make up the depreciation in full, perhaps, not in part. If they made up what I thought was equal to half the depreciation, I should rest satisfied. As the relation between pastor and church is quite distinct from the relation between minister and people, I have thought it my duty to make this statement to you, before anything be said to the town, and to request your opinion and advice upon it. It is not my expectation, that anything should be done for the fifteen years that are past: and if the town would now state my salary, on labor, corn, rye, cider, butter and cheese, beef and pork, at the price they bore on the day of my ordination, I would consent to take £60 for my salary. If any should think it disadvantageous to the town for me to be dismissed and remove, they must know, on the least reflection, that it will probably be attended with more loss to me, than to any other person.

"With the hope and expectation that you, brethren, will be enabled and disposed to advise me in this case to what will be wisest, and best, I subscribe myself your friend and pastor, in the faith and fellowship of the gospel.

"NATHANAEL HOWE."

Oct. 20, 1806. This was read to Dea. Joseph Walker, and three other brethren, namely, Benjamin Adams, I. Burnap, and Moses Chamberlain.

Nov. 10, 1806. The church met at the request of their pastor, to give him their advice what he ought to do, in the present depreciated state of his salary, and they advised him to ask to have the depreciation made up. And he observed to them, that if that was their advice, he would thank them to carry it into effect. They then voted to request the selectmen (a majority of whom were present, and members of the church) to call a town meeting within five weeks, to see if the town will add fifty per cent. to the salary, till such time as labor and provisions fall in their prices as low as when he was ordained.

The town met on Dec. 15, 1806. Mr. Howe was called upon to read to the town the communication he had made to the church. Upon which the vote was put, " To see if the town will (on account of the depreciation of money) add $116,67[1] to the yearly salary of the Rev. Nathanael Howe, till such time as labor and provisions fall in their prices as low as when he was ordained." This passed in the negative by a large majority.

Then Mr. Howe proposed to see if the town would add $116,67 till such time as the members of our General Court receive less than $2 per day for their services. This was negatived by a large majority.

Then Mr. Howe proposed to see if the town will add $116,67 for seven years, from the first day of January next. This passed in the negative by a large majority.

Then Mr. Howe proposed to see if the town will make up one half the depreciation on his salary from this time while he continues their minister. This passed in the negative by a large majority.

Then Mr. Howe proposed to see if the town will in future give him $200 for his annual salary, and average it on labor, corn, rye, cider, butter and cheese, beef and pork, at the prices they bore on the day of his ordination. This passed in the negative by a large majority.

Then Mr. Howe proposed to see if the town will purchase his house and land and keep it for the next minister. This passed in the negative by a large majority.

Then Mr. Howe proposed to see if the town will request the church by a vote to grant him a dismission. This passed in the negative by a large majority.

Then Mr. Howe said he had but one proposition more to make ; which was to see if the town were willing he should publish the communication he had made to the church, and read to the town this day, and all the doings of the town thereon. And this also passed in the negative by a large majority. Attest, Ephraim Read, *Town Clerk.*

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[1] This is fifty per cent. of £70. — N.

When my communication was read to Dea. Joseph Walker, Maj. Burnap, Mr. Benjamin Adams, and 'Squire Chamberlain, they lamented the circumstance, but thought it proper to lay the matter before the church for their advice.

When it was read to the church, sixteen brethren were present; fourteen of whom advised me to ask the town for an addition to my salary, and two were opposed to it. And in town meeting there were only three of the fourteen, who advised me to ask it, who held up their hands in favor of it; namely, Dea. Joseph Walker, Major Isaac Burnap, and Mr. Benjamin Adams; and only three of the town; namely, 'Squire Stimson, Col. J. Valentine, and Mr. Samuel Goddard.[1]

The reason of my fixing on that sum, and not being willing to accept of less, was because a less sum would do me no good. If I had an addition to my salary, I must pay more attention to the ministry; and if not, I must continue to supply the wants of my family by the labor of my hands. It was plain the town were unwilling to make that addition, although it was only one half of what justice and equity required them to do; and it has always afforded me pleasure, to think I had opportunity to show, I did not value an hundred dollars, as much as the people generally did an hundred cents: for but few would have had more than one dollar annually to have paid, above the nominal sum, to have furnished me with as much as I needed. Some have supposed that the town did nothing that day, because they granted no money; but in this they were greatly deceived; for they convinced me, I could place no dependence on their justice and equity; and

[1] The Reviewer in the Evening Gazette made a mistake, in stating that the "author attacked, by name, the persons who voted against an increase of his salary." On the contrary, he gave credit, *by name*, to all who voted in favor of it. — H.

that I must take care of myself, or perish. This opened my eyes in every direction, and employed my hands every day.

As it has been frequently said, that the town would have done something handsome, had I not stipulated the sum which they must grant, or nothing, they have had reason since to think, that in this also they were greatly deceived; for when the town had a meeting the next year, through the instrumentality of Dea. Fisk, to show their benevolence, and their regard to justice and equity, there was a tie;—the Moderator, the late Col. Eames, could not determine the vote: the meeting was adjourned for two weeks, and at the expiration of that time there was a handsome majority in favor of doing nothing.[1]

You are sensible that my health has sometimes been poor, and my mind greatly depressed: poverty has stared me in the face.

My brethren, may I ask a question; a plain, simple question? How shall I obtain your consent? Shall I take silence for consent? Your countenances discover a willingness.

The question is this: Do you know by what means I have become *so rich*, as to have a great house, finished and furnished; a farm, a herd of cattle, a flock

[1] I find among Mr. Howe's loose papers the following memoranda, drawn up in 1808, with the view of bringing the town to an issue in respect to his salary.

"The salary is no reasonable compensation for the services, though the services are poor.

"If you can be united in any one of the three following propositions, I will remain your minister.

"If not, I will take a dismission, provided a majority of the church and town will consent to it.

"1. I will remain your minister, and give you old sermons for the old salary.

"2. Or I will attend more to the business of my profession and cease in a measure from manual labor, if you will add 50 per cent. to my salary, or,

"3. If you will double the salary, I will apply myself wholly to my professional business; and if it be in the power of my life, I will do as well by you, as I have done by the ministerial land."—N.

of sheep, horses, and money at interest? I say nothing about my debts to-day.[1]

Shall I answer the question? The principal reason is this: because I have been doing *your business*, and neglecting *my own*. What is your business? Your business is to support your minister; and that is what I have been doing, for more than twenty years. And what is *my business?* My business is to study, and preach; and in this I have never abounded. It is true I have been absent from public worship not more than four or five Sabbaths, for twenty-five years; but I have frequently been present, and attempted to preach, when it has been mortifying to me, and could not have been edifying to you. I have sometimes administered reproof, both to the church and the society, in a manner that has been thought to discover some degree of severity: but in these cases you have always had good sense enough to know, you richly deserved it.

My object in preaching has been to explain, defend, and enforce, what have appeared to me the true doctrines of the gospel, *God's decrees;* for it must be glad tidings of great joy to all people, that God governs the world;—that his government is not only perfect, but universal, and lays the only solid foundation for foreknowledge; for nothing can be *certainly foreknown*, that is not fixed in the Divine decree.

The divinity of Christ. This lays the only solid foundation for the sufficiency of the atonement made for all mankind.

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[1] The way for a people to make their minister rich, *is not*, to give him a reasonable salary, one sufficient for his support; but a scanty salary, and try to starve him out; that will open his eyes, and employ his hands.

Solomon says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." But if a people wish to have a good minister, and faithful to them, they must be faithful to him.

It is granted, that our cats and dogs are good for nothing, except they are kept short. But our horses, cows, and oxen must be kept *well* to do honor, and be profitable to their owners.

The doctrine of personal election from eternity to everlasting life, as the only doctrine that makes it absolutely certain that any of our sinful race will be saved.

The doctrine of total depravity, as laying the only solid foundation for regeneration.

Regeneration by the agency of the Spirit of God, as laying the foundation for all holy exercises in the hearts of men.

Justification by faith alone, which is the same thing as divine forgiveness.

The certain and final *perseverance of the saints*, "through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;" *the eternity of hell torments*, and *the duties of morality.* I have always believed and always preached, that a *good life* is the best evidence of a *good heart.*

I have aimed to persuade you to follow Christ; but not in his circumcision, nor in his keeping the passover, *nor in his baptism*; for that was "to fulfil all righteousness," — "to manifest Christ to Israel," and introduce him into the ministry. If you follow Christ in his baptism, you must be baptized without *professing* either faith or repentance. An innocent person cannot repent; — Christ professed no repentance; and it would be absurd to suppose he professed faith in himself. The New Testament dispensation began, when the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." The *death of Christ* ratified the New Testament, and introduced the gospel dispensation. My object has been to persuade you to follow Christ in his patience, in his meekness, in his humility, in his self-denial, in his forgiveness of injuries, in his piety to his Father, and benevolence to all mankind.

During my ministry among you, 84 persons have been admitted to full communion. There have been 172 baptisms, 235 couples have been joined in marriage, 467 deaths, 27 members of this church have been recommended to the watch and fellowship of other churches, and 8 have been excommunicated.[1]

Those gentlemen of this Society, who have some years past extended the hand of charity, in equity, for my relief, will receive my gratitude.

Those ladies, who four years ago presented me with an elegant and costly surplice,[2] will accept my grateful acknowledgments. But my obligation for that favor, great as it was, bears no comparison with the gratitude I feel *to those*, who have expressed, *by their practice*, peculiar kindness and attention to Eliza,[3] in her lengthy and distressing illness; such kindnesses cannot be described, nor repaid;— may God reward them. If any have injured me, whether in word, or deed, they will accept my forgiveness. And if I have injured any, I have only to say, in the language of our Saviour: "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses."

The Rev. Nathanael Howe was born in that part of the town of Ipswich which belongs to Linebrook parish, Oct. 6, 1764; graduated at Harvard College 1786; ordained pastor of the church in this town, Oct. 5, 1791; and has continued in the ministry for more than twenty-four years.[4]

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[1] July 20, 1825. Admissions 117, Baptisms 231, Marriages 325, Deaths 673 recommended to other churches 38, Excommunicated 9. — H.

[2] 1811. The amount subscribed for the surplice was $36,58. — N.

[3] Eliza, was the author's eldest daughter, who had been sick of a consumption for more than two years, and died the Wednesday following the delivery of this sermon, in the 22d year of her age. — H.

[4] Continued in the ministry for upward of 33 years. — H.

As I have given you an account of the pastors of this church, from the time it was formed; of the number of admissions, amounting in the whole to 444; of the baptisms, amounting to 1,907; I will give you an account of the deacons.

* Dea. Benjamin Burnap,
* Dea. Joseph Haven,
* Dea. Ebenezer Kimball,
* Dea. Joseph Bixby,
* Dea. Henry Mellen,
* Dea. Jason Walker,
* Dea. Moses Haven,
* Dea. Stephen Kinsman,
* Dea. Joseph Walker,
* Dea. Abel Fisk,
Dea. Samuel Walker,[1]
Dea. Elijah Fitch,[2]
Dea. James Freeland.[3]

Those gentlemen who have received a liberal education from this town are: —

Rev. Elias Haven,[4]	graduated at	Harvard University in	1733
Rev. John Mellen,[5]	"	" "	1741
Dr. John Wilson,	"	" "	1741
Rev. Benjamin Caryl,[6]	"	" "	1761
Rev. Moses Adams,[7]	"	" "	1771
Dr. Jonathan Eames,[8]	"	" "	1775
Rev. John Fitch,[9]	"	Brown University,	1790
Dr. Gilbert Dench,[10]	"	" "	1793
Leonard Mellen, Esq.[11]	"	Harvard University,	1797
Rev. Daniel Loring,[12]	"	Brown University,	1800
Rev. Josiah Moulton,[13]			1802
Dr. Jeremy Stimson,[14]	"	Harvard University,	1804
Rev. Isaac Jones,	"	Williams College,	1810
Appleton Howe, A. B.[15]	"	Harvard University,	1815

[1] Dismissed March 8, 1818. [2] Died April 27, 1847, aged 68.
[3] Resigned Nov. 14, 1830. Samuel Morse, M. L. Buck, and Isaac V. Adams, have since been chosen.
[4] Originally settled in Franklin, Mass.
[5] Settled in Sterling, Mass., and subsequently in Hanover, Mass.
[6] Minister of Dover, Mass. [7] Was settled in Acton, Mass.
[8] Tutor at Cambridge, and afterwards physician in Holliston, Mass.
[9] Settled in Danville, Vt. [10] Of Boston.
[11] A lawyer at Waterloo, N. Y. [12] Originally settled at Foxboro', Mass.
[13] Settled at Oxford, Mass. [14] Of Dedham, Mass.
[15] Physician of Weymouth, Mass.

The names of those gentlemen of Hopkinton who have since received a liberal

Such has been the town, church, ministers, deacons, graduates, and such the state of society, for an hundred years.

What now remains is to conclude the subject with some reflections on what has been said, and some advice in the choice and treatment of another minister.

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever."

Your habits are so firmly fixed, that no reformation is to be expected during my ministry; and, indeed, it would require more power in the Deity to effect it, than it did to create the world. For when he created the world, he had only to say: "Let there be light, and there was light." He had no opposition. But to bring you to a sense of justice and equity, he must overcome your private, personal attachment to your own *supposed* worldly interest; and that would require more *power* than it did to create the world!

And beside, my life is so far spent, that, should you reform, it is doubtful whether it would produce any very beneficial effects on my labors. I mean to tell the whole truth without partiality, or respect of persons.

I. Then, we see from this subject, that when a people are unjust to their minister, they do not know where they are going, any more than the man who goes to the tavern, into company, to the gambling-table, to intemperance, family quarrelling, poverty, sickness, death and hell! Such persons frequently think they are walking at liberty, when they are, in

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education are as follows: Mellen Chamberlain, B. U., 1827; Elias Nason, B. U., 1835; Benj. S. Corbett, B. U., 1837; Leonard Fitch, Burlington; James M. Phipps, B. U. 1842. — N.

reality, bringing themselves under the severest of all masters.

Just so, quarrels, divisions, contentions, separations, meeting-houses, lawsuits, are the consequences of injustice to ministers.

When a people begin to step on the devil's ground, they do not know when they shall stop.

II. We see from this subject the meaning of that part of the second commandment, which speaks "of visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation." The injustice of the fathers to their minister, falls on their children, in the loss of that religious order, instruction, and discipline, which they would have received, had the fathers been just and equitable; and it descends to the third and fourth generation, in contentions, divisions, and every evil work.

III. We may see from this subject, what abundant gratitude *we ought to feel*, to the creator and governor of the world, that we can live in so much harmony, when we have had so many things to disturb our peace. The half-way covenant, — religious sentiments, — politics, — church discipline; — and the want of justice and equity, in the support of the gospel!!

All which now remains is, to give you some advice in your choice and treatment of another minister. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever." In a little time more, this sacred desk will be left vacant by my dismission or death. This countenance you will see no more, in the land of the living; the tongue which now speaks will be silent; and these eyes closed in death. Then, you will need another minister. Will you receive the word of exhortation, from

one who has had some experience in the gospel ministry, and who thinks he wishes your temporal and spiritual good?

Look out a man of good natural understanding, of a good education, and a pious heart: and this you must learn, not so much from his profession, as practice. For when men talk very freely of their own piety, we have reason to doubt their sincerity. "Empty vessels sound the loudest."

When you have found a man of good natural abilities, of a good education, and pious heart; settle him. Give him a generous and honorable support, and pay him punctually, as you have paid me. This you must do as a duty you owe to God, to yourselves, and your children. To enable him to apply himself to the work of the ministry, if his salary depreciate ten per cent., make it good; if fifty per cent., make it good: if it depreciates to half its original value, double it: this you must do to convince him you mean to be honest; and that he has no occasion to be troubled about worldly things.

Attend on his ministry constantly: you build schoolhouses, and support schoolmasters; but of what consequence is this, unless you send your children to school? Just so it is with respect to a minister. You may have a minister and pay him £70 salary, or seventy times seven, but if you do not attend on his ministry, it is all lost.

Pray for him sincerely and piously; this will bring you to the house of God in a suitable frame: this will prepare you to receive the gospel from his lips, and to be savingly benefited by its blessed effects.

And one thing more. Live in peace among yourselves. Eph. 4: 31, 32. "Let all bitterness, and wrath,

and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice."— "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

If ye do these things, prosperity will attend you on earth, and heaven will be your eternal portion.